

workers' truth

Toward the International Party of Revolutionary Workers

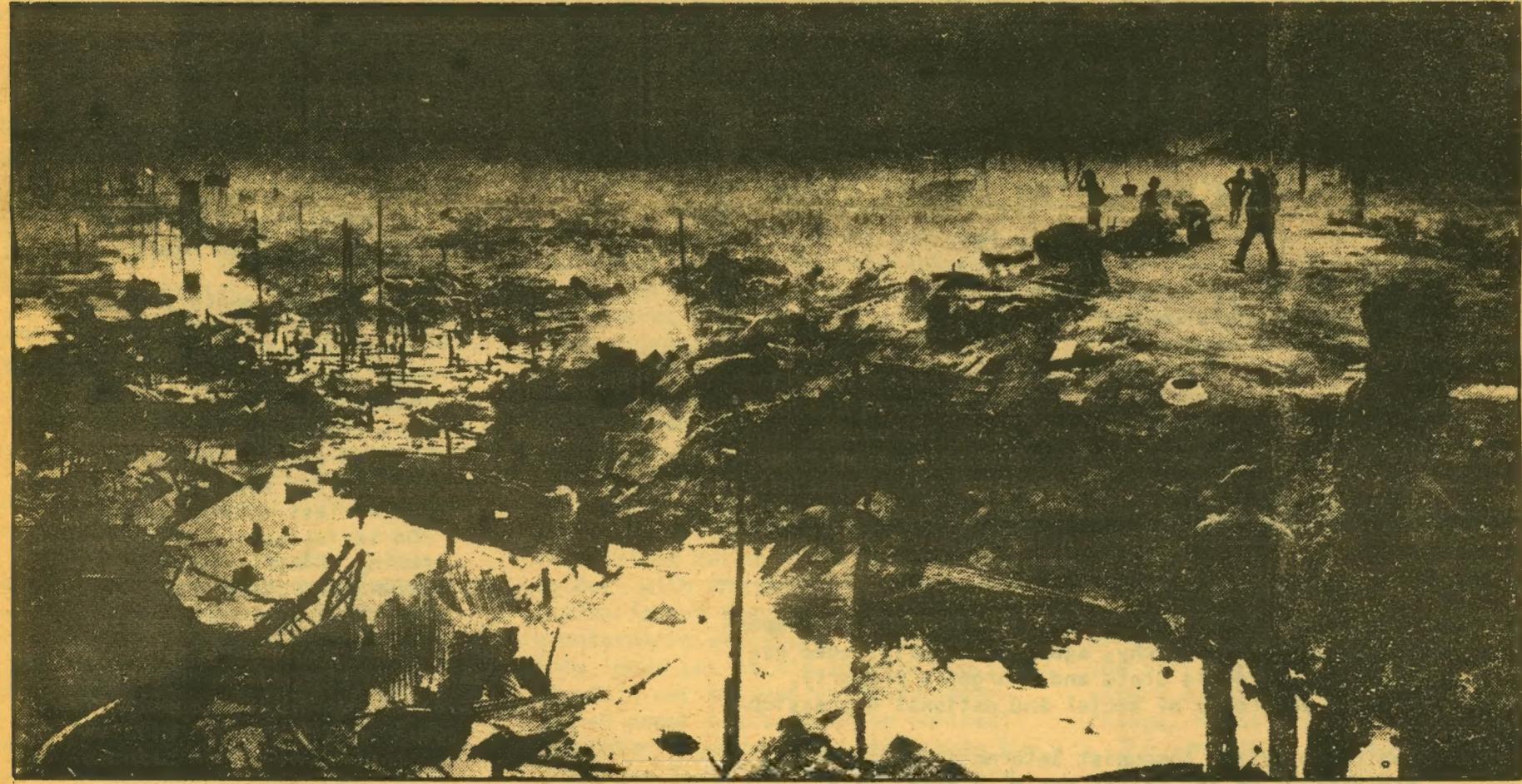
Vol.2, No.6

June, 1974

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As Governments Topple

Capitalist Rule Means Chaos



The ruin and devastation of capitalist war.

The old capitalist "order" no longer exists; it can no longer exist. The final outcome of the capitalist system of production is chaos.

PLATFORM OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, 1919

Within the last few months the world has witnessed a rash of failing votes of confidence, new elections, scandals, coups d'état and all in all a general topsy-turvy situation as to who the capitalists in each country feel is best suited for governing their niche in world capitalist society. The list of crisis-ridden countries includes the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, France, Israel, Germany, Italy, Northern Ireland, Portugal and China.

As impeachment proceedings slowly grind forward, the release of edited transcripts of presidential conversations coupled with other Watergate evidence has virtually torn away the

veil of "democracy" surrounding American government.

In Great Britain a strike by the National Union of Mineworkers forced the Tory government to call an election. The result was a minority Labour government which has carried out essentially the same policies as the Tories and which has to a great extent kept the unions passive. However the Labourites have been unable to deal with the problem of inflation and the possibility of British workers moving outside the strait-jacket of the trade unions in an effort to better the standard of living places Labour in a tenuous position.

Failures to get budgets passed brought the downfall of Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government in Canada and Gough Whitlam's Labour government in Australia. The Australian Labourites have apparently received a majority of seats in the recent elections, but indications are that Whitlam will not have

an easy time of it. Canada's elections are scheduled for July 8 and could very well lead to a somewhat precarious Liberal-New Democratic coalition or a new set of elections.

Charles Pompidou's death brought new presidential elections in France. The first round of elections saw the utter drubbing of majority Gaullist candidate Jacques Chaban-Delmas, while the second round voting was split almost evenly between victor Valery Giscard d'Estaing (Independent Republican) and bourgeois Socialist Francois Mitterrand. Couple the 50-50 Giscard-Mitterrand split with the Gaullist majority in the National Assembly and you have a pretty good recipe for new general elections in France in the fairly near future.

As a result of the bloodbath of the October 1973 Mideast War, a bloodbath which ended in virtual stalemate, the right-wing opposition managed to force the resignation of Israeli premier

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India and the 'Bomb'

India has become the sixth country to join the "nuclear club". Other members of this select circle are the United States, Russia, China, France and Great Britain. What it means is that one more country has the power to directly commence the ultimate annihilation of the world, the "final solution" to everyone's problems. The capitalist press here in the United States has been decrying the fact that India now has "the bomb". In fact, they have decried the fact that anyone got "the bomb" besides the United States. Editorials and news articles have been written pointing out the possibility that India would use nuclear weapons against Pakistan which would probably start world war three. India's rulers have responded that they intend to use nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes. World opinion is, however, skeptical, and rightfully so. We have seen the use nuclear energy has been put to in the past: Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

What is the Marxist attitude toward nuclear energy and "the bomb"? We feel that nuclear energy, like all technological advances in the decadent phase of capitalism, has been and will be used against the interests of the masses of humanity. Tremendous possibilities exist for the planned, safe use of nuclear energy. However, such use can only come about in a society controlled by the producers, not a society controlled by a small minority whose only interest is to make a profit for themselves (be they corporate boards of directors or state bureaucrats).

As to "the bomb", we see it as a perfect example of capitalist decadence. It illustrates completely the barbaric depths to which capitalist society has sunk. Already the United States and Russia (the two oldest members of the "nuclear club") have stockpiled enough nuclear warheads to destroy the earth at least four times over. There are bourgeois socialists who claim that the Russian nuclear force represents "the workers' bomb". That such a statement should masquerade as Marxist is indeed a travesty. Not only that, but it points up the essentially counter-revolutionary nature of such organizations and of the

theory of Russia, China, etc. as "degenerated or deformed workers' states". Statements that American workers should welcome Russian nuclear warheads showering down on their population centers because it "defends the workers' state" have no more place in a Marxist organization than statements that Russian workers should welcome American nuclear warheads showering down on them because it "defends democracy". The working class of one country can not be defended by annihilating its class brothers and sisters in another country. Let us remind the bourgeois socialists that the same class that would launch the "workers' bomb" is the class that sent the "workers' tanks" to crush the working class in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. It is the same class that crushes worker militancy in Russia. That class is not the working class, but a capitalist class as ruthless and reactionary as the American capitalist class.

We are not, however, liberal phrasemongers demanding that the world's bury their nuclear weapons so as to return to more conventional, more "humane" methods of warfare. Talk about disarmament under capitalism is just so much prattle. It is a way of disarming not the capitalist state, but of disarming the working class ideologically, lulling it into passivity, in the expectancy that its rulers will soon come to their senses. The capitalists could not, however, disarm even if they wanted to. The conditions of production of their system are such that they must produce ever more greater and mightier weapons of destruction. Only the working class can disarm the capitalist state. And this can be done only through proletarian socialist revolution and the complete dismantling of the capitalist state machinery. Only in an international society based on mutual co-operation of all producers will the "need" for nuclear arms and arms in general be eradicated. And only the working class through intransigent struggle against capital and all its agents can bring that society into existence.

DEBATE

Class Nature of the Soviet Union

Saturday, July 13

Participants:

Revolutionary Workers Group
Class Struggle League
Spartacist League
Revolutionary Socialist League

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: 3rd Unitarian Church of Chicago
301 N. Mayfield
Near Lake & Austin

Proletarians of all countries! In the struggle against imperialist savagery, against monarchy, against the privileged estates, against the bourgeois State and bourgeois property, against all kinds and forms of social and national oppression--
UNITE!

--Manifesto of the Communist International to the
Proletariat of the Entire World, 6 March 1919

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Chaos

from page 1

Golda Meir. Meir has been succeeded by Yitzhak Rabin, a representative of the more "dovish" wing of Mapai. Rabin has managed to put together a slim majority coalition (61 out of 120 seats) with Mapam and the small Civil Rights Party. Arrayed against Rabin, however, is not only the right-wing Likud opposition and Mapai's former bloc partner the National Religious Party, but also to a certain extent the Rafi section of Mapai itself, led by Moshe Dayan. Dayan was dumped from the cabinet by Rabin. With unemployment and inflation continuing unabated, Rabin's position appears to be highly tenuous indeed, and a call for new elections, even before the year is out, would not be surprising.

A spy scandal involving one of Willy Brandt's top advisors (who was apparently an East German agent) forced Brandt to resign as Chancellor of West Germany. Brandt has been replaced by Helmut Schmidt, a more conservative representative of the Social-Democratic Party. The scandal follows a number of local electoral gains for the opposition Christian-Democratic Party. Besides forcing Brandt to resign, the scandal has also dealt a blow to the German brand of detente, Brandt's Ostpolitik of rapprochement with East Germany and the "Soviet bloc" countries.

In Italy the Rumor left-center coalition has been plagued with internal dissent and parliamentary maneuvering. Rumor has managed to remain as head of the government, but he has constantly had to patch together new blocs. Recently Italy was split by a referendum on divorce. A large campaign was waged by the fascist Italian Social Movement and the Vatican to abolish Italy's recent legislation legalizing divorce. Besides their activities on the electoral front, the Italian fascists have begun carrying out a stepped-up campaign of terror. At a time when living conditions in Italy are at a very low level, events are developing almost parallel to their development prior to Mussolini's takeover in the early '20's.

In Northern Ireland right-wing Protestant forces have waged a reactionary anti-Catholic strike which forced the moderate Northern Ireland executive to resign. The resignation was followed by the reimposition of direct rule by Britain and the beefing up of British occupational forces. The general strike comes on the heels of continued terror throughout the working class neighborhoods of Belfast and the rest of Ulster. Both the Irish Republican Army (particularly the Provisional wing) and the Protestant Ulster Defense Force have kept up sustained bombings of pubs, dwellings, etc. The situation in Ulster is a veritable powder keg of all-out civil war between Protestants and Catholics, and the presence of British troops serves only to keep the two sides at each others' throats and maintain British dominance.

In Portugal the capitalists proved that their rule can be maintained not only by using the stick (replacing democracy with fascism), but also by using the carrot. A military coup replaced the Caetano regime with one of capitalist "democracy". The left parties of capital, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party, and the trade unions under their leadership were brought back to keep the Portuguese

workers in line with a few pay hikes. However, the workers are going for a little more than was bargained for and have seized several factories. However the strike movement is waning and the unions have been able to persuade the workers to give back the factories in view of their lack of any revolutionary direction and leadership.

Nor has the political crisis left the autarchic state capitalist regimes untouched. The deepest expression of the political confusion in the ranks of capital here is the renewed "cultural revolution" in China. Essentially this and the last "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" have nothing to do with the proletariat. They are actually purges of the ruling clique of capital. In an autarchic capitalist society such as Russia or China, the veil of parliamentarism is not necessary. Instead the agents of capital combine police state discipline with the fraud of "socialism in one country". Internal squabbles are dealt with, not in parliament, but in the leading bodies of the ruling Communist Parties. Rather than elections and impeachments, they have purges.

What is it that is causing this topsy-turvy game of political musical chairs in parliaments and presidential palaces throughout the world? What sinister force has turned the imperialist powers of the world into Latin American banana republics with chief executives and parliamentary majorities shifting so fast and so often even a scorecard wouldn't help you keep track? To many religious fanatics who seek the answers not in the material reality of our existence, but in supernatural forces that manipulate men's minds, recent events represent signs of the last days and the coming of the final judgment. While the latter part of their formula represents just so much hocus-pocus, the part about the last days may very well be true. The fast shuffles in the corridors of capitalist politics are all attempts by the various national ruling classes to deal with the economic crisis of capitalism at the expense of their counterparts elsewhere. Inevitably this leads (as it did in 1914 and 1939) to world war between shifting imperialist power blocs, another colossal slaughter. However, the difference between the first two wars and a third world war lies in the vast technological developments which the capitalists have in characteristic fashion put to reactionary use. We agree with Albert Einstein's remark that he didn't know what world war three would be fought with, but that world war four would be fought with sticks and stones.

However, world war three is not inevitable. There is a force that can stop it. That force is the united class-conscious revolutionary working class. For the chaos that exists today does not stem from some sinister outside force (be it god or devil), but from the internal contradictions of capitalism itself. These contradictions, always inherent in capitalism, came to full bloom (as a weed blooms) in 1914. When capitalism was still an ascendant progressive system, it was able to alleviate its imbalances, its crises of overproduction by ex-

panding from the capitalist metropoles into the underdeveloped non-capitalist areas of the globe. However, by 1914 the non-capitalist areas had been successfully penetrated and integrated into the capitalist world market. Capital expansion had nowhere to go, so it was forced to turn in on itself. Rather than expanding into "untouched" areas, the imperialist powers were forced to rob each other of their existing spheres of influence. Needless to say this brought wars, two very big ones and a myriad of smaller ones.

Imperialist war also serves another integral purpose for capitalism. It provides a means of allowing a certain degree of capital expansion to replace what was destroyed in the war. Thus the crisis-bred war results in a period of reconstruction, empirically termed a "boom" because things are better than they were during the war or immediately prior to the war. The reconstruction period after the first world war lasted just over 10 years. That of the second managed to last about twice as long due to the fact that the second world war left Europe completely devastated.

This reconstruction period has, however, come to an end. By the middle-to-late sixties capital expansion had again reached the saturation point. The WORLD CAPITALIST SYSTEM was faced either with complete stagnation or destruction of capital in a new world war so that there will be room for more expansion when its over (if there is anything left to expand).

Of course, the capitalists themselves do not reason this way. They are themselves prisoners of their own economic system. They think up all sorts of "good reasons" to rationalize their actions, and most of them probably believe their excuses. Since they deal with their problems empirically, as they arise, and in terms of their own national capital bloc, they attempt all sorts of schemes to stem the growing inflation, to pacify the militancy of the working class and to put themselves on the best competitive level on the world market. This is, of course, no mean feat. Thus, as in the past when the emperors' soothsayers did not predict the right things, heads roll.

The working class can, however, put an end to this political and economic chaos before the ICBMs get a chance. The way to do it is through the abolition of capital, not just in this or that country, but internationally. Nor is this wishful thinking, idealist utopia. All that is necessary is the development of revolutionary class consciousness. That is, the collective awareness of its social position, the historical tasks before it and the methods of carrying out those tasks. An absolute imperative for this development is an international party of revolutionary workers. Such a party would consist of the class conscious communist vanguard of the working class. We are not talking about a small clique of generals, but an organization capable of providing the theoretical and programmatic leadership necessary to raise the class as a whole to a revolutionary communist consciousness.

A Statement

The following STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES is based on a long and thoroughgoing discussion within the Revolutionary Workers Group.

1. Capitalism originally played a progressive role in the development of the productive forces. The historical tasks of capitalism were the creation of a single integrated world economic system and the creation of an industrial working class, whose task it would be to supersede capitalist society through its destruction and the creation of socialism. By 1914 capitalism's tasks had been carried out. It could no longer play a progressive role. Like an apple that has passed its prime, it began to decay. Today, capitalist decadence is apparent all around us: the stagnation of our cities, the pollution of our water and air, the reactionary results of technological advance in which new techniques and machines are not used to help humanity but serve only to throw people out of work, and above all, the seemingly endless cycle of crisis/war/reconstruction, a cycle which may very well meet its end in the annihilation of humanity.

2. The tendency of capital historically has been one of concentration and centralization into larger and fewer capital blocs. This process led from individual entrepreneurial capital to joint-stock companies to large trusts and cartels, monopoly capital. With the advent of imperialist decadence, spurred on by the needs of the first world war, the major trend of capital concentration was that of state capitalism. Under state capitalism the state functions as the collective capitalist, either co-ordinating the activity of various large capital

blocs within its national frontiers (as in the "Western democracies") or by owning outright the major means of production as in the so-called "Communist" countries. "Pure" state capitalism as exists in Russia and China has often been confused with socialism or at least a deformed dictatorship of the proletariat. Nothing could be further from the truth. State capitalism is in no way progressive. It is nothing less than the expression of decadent capitalism's dictatorship over the proletariat.

3. With the integration of all countries into the imperialist world economic system, real national liberation became a utopia. All wars of "national liberation" have merely resulted in shifting the "liberated" nation from the sphere of influence of one imperialist power to that of another. The slogans of "national defense" and the "right of self-determination" are used by the capitalists to mask their own reactionary designs. The era of progressive national wars, of true wars of national defense, is over. It ended globally with the outbreak of the first imperialist world war. Workers have no "national" interests. The interests of the workers of all nations are identical: abolition of capitalism and the construction of socialism. Our task is not to maintain and defend the borders of the capitalist nation-state, but to break them down through the development of an international socialist society.

4. Trade unions originated in the nineteenth century as a means by which the workers in different trades could join together in an attempt to allevi-

ate their working conditions and gain a larger portion of the value they produced. They were the means by which workers fought to better their position on the wage-labor market. During the progressive phase of capitalism, the unions could thus play a necessary role in the interests of the working class. After capitalism entered its decadent phase, however, the task was no longer one of ameliorating conditions in an historically progressive society. Capitalism's progressive role had ended. Any attempts to reform capitalism rather than annihilate it could only mean the maintenance of capitalist society, a society which can only be maintained at the expense of the working class. The reactionary role of unions is quite clear. They serve only to divide the working class on the basis of industry or trade, and act as policemen inside the factory. They are used to whip up nationalist fervor and to push through productivity increases. Their greatest crime is that of recruiting agent for the capitalist army in times of crisis (first and second world wars). The unions have proven themselves to be an integral part of the capitalist system. Any hope of "capturing" the unions for the revolution is as utopian as hoping to capture Congress and transform it into a workers' council. The future struggles of the working class will not only be struggles against the employers and the state, but will be struggles against the unions as well.

5. Unlike unions, parliaments, congresses and national assemblies were never working class organizations. They were part and parcel of the capitalist state. However, so long as capitalism remained progressive, with room for expansion, parliaments could be used by working class political parties as a means of securing meaningful social reform for the class and also as a forum for broad socialist propaganda and agitation. Under decadent capitalism "meaningful social reform" is utopian. The days of the minimum program of social reform and the maximum program of socialist revolution and the destruction of capitalism were swept away with the outbreak of world war one. Today parliaments can serve only as a meeting place for the different factions of capital. The presence of revolutionaries in parliaments could only serve to reinforce the illusions of the working class in parliamentary activity and capitalist democracy. The task of revolutionaries is to break down these illusions not build them up with talk of electing a workers' government or using Congress as a "revolutionary tribune".

6. In times of sharpening crisis the capitalists attempt to derail the independent struggle of the working class by luring it into various left-talking fronts. Since the first world war we have seen a wide assortment of popular fronts, united fronts, anti-imperialist fronts, anti-fascist fronts, national liberation fronts, fronts for democratic rights, fronts against war. All of these fronts have one thing in common: they have been attempts to use the working class as a mass base for the achievement of the goals of this or that faction of capital. All of the perpetrators of these fronts, be they Democrats, Peronists, Labourites, Stalinists, Trotskyists or Social-Democrats, are agents of the system that the working class can not hope to re-

form, but must destroy if it is to go forward. Frontism is an obstacle to the growth of revolutionary consciousness. It is a confusionist attempt to portray our enemies as our friends and drag us once again onto the dead-end road of reform. Revolutionary communists must struggle for a revolutionary communist program in the working class. This means a consistent struggle for the autonomy of the working class against all bourgeois fronts be they "popular" or "united".

7. There are only two roads open for humanity: the continued domination of capital with the consequent decay of society into barbarism and world war three, or revolution by the working class. Such a revolution would have to be international. It could not be confined to one country or one area indefinitely. To be successful, the working class revolution must have as its objective, not the seizure and use of the capitalist state, but its destruction. Likewise a victorious working class can not simply lay hold of the capitalist economy and use it in its own interests. The working class can not use capitalism. It can only be used by capitalism. All facets of capitalist economy must be obliterated: wage-labor, market economy, money, surplus-value, the division between intellectual and manual labor. This, of course, can not be completely carried out overnight. However, the struggle must be waged incessantly. Any hesitation, any let-up in the struggle against the forces of capital both objective and subjective, will result in our defeat. There can be no adaptation to the methods of the old system. The working class must replace the capitalist economy of decadence and destruction with a vibrant, progressive economy organized and administered through the international cooperation of all workers, all producers. The period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transition from capitalism to communism, is not a period when the new communist economic forms are superimposed on the old capitalist forms, but a period when the old forms are destroyed and replaced with the new.

8. The classwide organs of struggle for the working class are the workers' councils or soviets. Workers' councils are not ongoing formations that exist under capitalism. They arise during periods of sharp class struggle. In a revolutionary situation the councils will form the basis of working class power. After the seizure of power by the working class, the councils will function as the means of proletarian rule. The workers' councils must be democratic. They must be open to all parties and organizations that support the cause of the working class: the destruction of capital in all its forms. The councils must be based in the factories, schools and neighborhoods. They must combine executive and legislative duties. All delegates will be subject to immediate recall by their constituents. No council delegates will receive more goods and services than the average worker. Insofar as possible positions will be rotated among all the workers. The workers' councils represent the expression of workers' democracy which is the only form of government for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

9. There is only one ideology of the working class: Marxism. Marxism must be counterposed to all capitalist ideal-

of Principles

gies: feminism, nationalism, trade unionism, Stalinism, Trotskyism, Social-Democratism, etc. Likewise it must be counterposed to all forms of middle class radicalism: spontaneism, anarchism, workerism, etc. Only Marxism can explain the development of the class struggle. And it is only through struggle around the communist program, conceived and developed through the application of revolutionary Marxist theory, that the working class can take power. There are many bourgeois socialist tendencies who claim to be Marxist. However, the only real Marxist organizations are those who maintain an intransigent proletarian internationalism and who stand firmly against all forms of capital and its institutions.

10. The bearer of Marxism within the working class, the historical memory and conscience of the class is the revolutionary party. The revolutionary party does not exist as an alien being outside or above the class, but as part of the class. The party is composed of the most class conscious members of the working class and those intellectuals and other middle class elements who have been won to the proletarian cause. The party is the working class communist vanguard. It provides leadership through its theoretical and programmatic clarity, by the example of its unswerving allegiance to the historical interests of the international working class as a whole and by its willingness to be the best fighters in the struggles of the class. The central task for the party is the development of the class consciousness of the class. This is done through a coherent intervention into the struggles of the class. This intervention is not one of escalating reform demands, but a communist intervention, illustrating the necessity for the destruction of capitalism through workers' revolution. Just as the revolutionary party is not the working class, but only its most class conscious section, likewise it can not take or hold power for the class. Only the working class as a class can exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat. The role of the party is again to provide the theoretical and programmatic leadership necessary for the class to maintain its dictatorship, not to institute a dictatorship of the party until the class is "ready". The revolutionary party has no "historical birthright" to rule. Only the working class has that birthright.

11. At the dawn of the imperialist epoch, with the outbreak of the first imperialist world war, plunging the world into capitalist decay, virtually the entire workers' movement crossed over into the capitalist camp. Before the war the Social-Democratic parties had had a minimum reform program and a maximum program of revolution. When capitalism passed from its progressive to its imperialist phase, the time had come to abandon the minimum program. However, the Social-Democrats did the opposite. They abandoned the maximum program. They supported the war efforts of "their" capitalists. They took the reins of government here and there and played the role of loyal opposition elsewhere. They, along with the unions, played the major role in drumming up working class support for the war. They actively aided in the crushing of workers' struggles, murdering workers and revolutionaries. The epochal change in capitalism found

Social-Democracy lacking in the ability to transform its strategy and tactics in line with the change in social conditions. The years of predominantly reformist practice weighed heavily on the Social-Democratic parties. Just as 1914 marked a watershed in the course of capitalism's development, likewise it marked a watershed in the workers' movement. 1914 marks the transformation of Social-Democracy, the Second International, into an agent of imperialism. The line between the working class and Social-Democracy is a class line drawn in the blood of hundreds of thousands of workers. As with the unions, so Social-Democracy has become a counter-revolutionary factor in the class struggle. It must be swept away by the revolutionary working class along with the rest of capitalism's baggage.

12. The betrayal of the Second International did not bring an end to the working class movement entirely. There still existed significant revolutionary forces who grasped to one degree or another, the significance of imperialism and stood in resolute opposition to the war, calling for the transformation of the imperialist war into a class war of the revolutionary working class against the capitalists of all countries. The highest expression of the revolutionary internationalist movement of the working class could be found in the Russian Bolshevik Party, the German Spartacusbund and the Abstentionist Faction of the Italian Socialist Party. Out of the internationalist left came the basis for the Communist (Third) International. However, the major impetus for the formation of the International was the victory of the Russian Revolution. The seizure of power by the Russian working class with the Bolshevik Party at their head pointed the way forward for the working class of the entire world. The Russian Revolution marks the highest peak of the revolutionary workers' struggle. It is an event of greatest importance, for it proved concretely that the working class was capable of seizing and wielding political power in its own interests. It demonstrated the only way out for humanity from the barbaric abyss that is modern capitalism. The Russian Revolution was the practical vindication of Marxism and stands as a tribute to the struggle of the working class.

13. The question of socialism could only be posed in Russia. It could not be solved there. This was understood by the entire revolutionary left of the time. However, the hoped for and expected revolutions in West Europe either failed to materialize or were crushed. Isolated and weak, the fledgling workers' republic was doomed to destruction. In the absence of victory for the revolution in Europe, the Bolshevik Party attempted to buy time that could not be bought. Bureaucratism began to seep into the Soviet system. The economic struggle urged on by the Bolshevik Left stumbled and was finally abandoned. By 1921 the Bolshevik leadership had turned away from the historic Marxist axiom that communism had to be constructed by the workers themselves and instead chose to institute a dictatorship of the party in place of the weak and virtually decimated proletariat. But such an event was impossible. If the proletariat could not carry out its own dictatorship, then only one dictatorship could replace it: the dic-

tatorship of capital. Thus, it is no coincidence that the institution of the dictatorship of the party was coupled with the scrapping of the anti-capital struggle waged under war communism and replaced with the New Economic Policy of market economy, wage-labor and generalized commodity production. The Bolsheviks' belief that Russia remained proletariat because the Bolsheviks controlled the state which regulated production was a fantasy. Capitalism and the socialist proletariat do not mix. One must suppress the other. 1917 marked the revolutionary victory of the socialist proletariat in Russia. 1921 marked the counter-revolutionary victory of capital. Just as 1914 had been a watershed for the international workers' movement, so was 1921. The revolutionary attempts of the working class had been repulsed in Germany, Hungary and elsewhere. The Bolshevik-dominated leadership of the Communist International called for a retreat from the struggle parallel to their economic retreat in Russia. The Communist International had been born as a revolutionary international as a result of the victory of the Russian working class. It died as a result of their defeat. Errors which had been made during 1919-1920 were magnified. The old Social-Democratic minimum program was revived and redone under the term "transitional demands". The counter-revolutionary traitors of Social-Democracy were embraced in bourgeois-democratic struggle under the guise of "conquest of the masses". The Communist International became a tool for aiding the foreign policy interests of Russian capital. In short, 1921 marked the entrance of the Communist International into the camp of counter-revolution.

14. Despite the degeneration of the Communist International, the revolutionary Marxist movement continued to exist: in the Workers' Opposition and Workers' Truth Group in Russia, Workers' Dreadnought in England, the left wing of the Bulgarian Communist Party, the Italian Left Communists, the Communist Workers Parties of Germany and the Netherlands during the 1920's; Bilan and Prometheus in the 1930's; Internationalisme, the Munis-Peret tendency of the Trotskyist International, and the left wings of the French and Italian sections of the Trotskyist International in the 1940's. These groups were by no means perfect. They all had shortcomings both major and minor on various questions. However, they were an expression of the revolutionary struggle of the working class against the waves of imperialist war and counter-revolution.

15. By no means should the revolutionary left groups which developed during the period of the rise of the counter-revolution be confused with the Trotskyist Left Opposition and its subsequent fraudulent "Fourth International" (not to mention the plethora of tendencies which this "international" has split into). Trotskyism is and has been since the birth of the Trotskyist Opposition, an agent and apologist for state capitalism. During the 1920's the Trotskyists functioned as Stalin's "loyal opposition", counseling him on how state capitalism could better be organized. In the 1930's they used what little influence they had to drum up support (only "military" of course) for the "democratic" factions of capital

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Archives of the Revolution



The Dilemma is not War or Peace but War or Revolution

ARCHIVES OF THE REVOLUTION is a regular feature of WORKERS' TRUTH. Each month we reprint for the benefit of our readers part or all of a particular speech, article or document from the vast and rich heritage of the revolutionary Marxist movement. In this issue we reprint the article "The Dilemma is not War or Peace but War or Revolution". This article appeared in the Autumn-Winter 1950 issue of THE INTERNATIONALIST, the publication of the American supporters of the Left Communist International. Although the conjunctural circumstances are somewhat different today than at the time this article was written, we are reprinting it as it provides a Marxist statement on the working class and im-

perialist war. Today the world's population is breathing easier because of Henry Kissinger's latest "miracle" of "shuttle diplomacy" in the Middle East. Many think that a possible powder keg for world war three has been dampened. On the other hand, the achievement of nuclear capacity by India and the selling of nuclear fuel to Egypt by the United States is beginning to make world war more prominent in people's minds. However, as this article points out, the question is not capitalist war or capitalist peace. Capitalist peace is nothing more than an interval between wars. It is a breathing space where the combatants can rearm themselves and choose up new sides. "Peace" under capitalism is simply a

time for sweating more production out of the working class in preparation for sending them into another slaughter as the cannon fodder of capital. The question facing humanity is a question of counterposed social systems: on the one hand, capitalism, the system of war and wage-slavery, and on the other hand, socialism, the only system that can today provide for the peaceful advance of humanity. As the article points out, war will not be ended by disarmament talks and capitalism-oriented peace movements, but only by the destruction of the system that breeds war. The destruction of capitalism through worldwide working class revolution.

Public opinion is preoccupied at present with a great question: When will the next world war break out?

The possibility of a new international conflict is not denied by anybody. Everybody is concerned about it. They understand in a situation of this kind that the politicians who speak of a fight to capture the masses for peace, already feel their skin burnt from the effects of atom bomb radiation. Everybody hesitates to take a position in favor of a new war. Demagogic propositions are advanced to conjure away the coming conflict: disarmament, outlawing the atomic bomb, mutual appeasement, peace movements, or strengthening the U.N.O. (United Nations Organization). For the working class to think of opposing war by these methods is equal to the practice of magic, but certainly not the basis of the struggle against war.

It is clear that Russia and her allies are not fighting against war. They simply aim to neutralize the military and economic force of their adversaries. Only in that sense does Stalinism operate all over the world. It is not against the use of the atomic bomb. This would then sanctify their use of it second, in retaliation. On the other hand, neither do they take the peace movement very seriously, the aim of which is not the transformation of the

capitalist social order, but simply to maintain conditions as they exist at present.

The genuine Marxists must not pose the problem in the question: Will there be a New World War? To the genuine Marxists, the conflict is inevitable as long as capitalist society exists. They, the Marxists, are the unique workers for peace through the struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the proletarian revolution. They reject, therefore, the hypocritical and false pacifist crusade, denounce it and refuse to join with it in any manner whatsoever. The claim that it is possible to secure peace or conjure away war is the refuge of all "the men of good will" and therefore also, of the bourgeoisie. Such a claim is treason to and proof of the abandonment of the interests of the working class.

The work of political clarification that qualifies as revolutionary must be based on the following:

1- It must anticipate the end of the period in which the workers are forced to fight for this or that imperialist antagonist. It must assert in a most explicit manner that the working class will not fight for any of these, and refuse in every case to yield to the deceit and trickery of Imperialist War.

2- They do not support any victor, but profit from the crisis of the world bourgeoisie in order to prepare and lead to the revolutionary struggle. The proletariat recognizes the two adversaries only as their class enemies and in both cases, there is only one kind of politics to follow behind either front:- revolutionary defeatism.

3- In face of the attempt to line up the masses physically and spiritually for the war, the Marxists call upon them to refuse to shed their blood for the cause of any Imperialism whatsoever, and to work instead not for the bloody victory of this or that brigand, but for the victory of the revolutionary proletariat.

There is no greater task for the real revolutionary than to make clear to the workers that they have nothing to defend in capitalist society, and that they should not seek to support this or that Imperialism that permits a more easy life. To the proletariat, whoever gives support to the war betrays their cause. The proletariat has no interest in defending anybody in this conflict, or any other Imperialist conflagration. It has only one interest: to conquer the peace by the only possible method: Revolution!

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Forward to a Workers' Government!"

All these groups believe that the revolutionary vanguard, that is, the group which represents the true interests of the working class within the class as a whole, the vanguard, which has the highest consciousness of the class and wages uncompromising struggle to counterpose its program of revolutionary Marxism to all others, should demand that workers fight to put a worker in the White House. A worker in the White House and everything will be just honey and pie. With a worker in the White House and with capital centralized to its fullest, (bourgeois) "socialism" will be introduced (that is state capitalism).

Not one of these groups is the vanguard of the working class. In fact none of them are even part of the working class movement. All these groups act as a faction within capitalism, to clean house for it and call for a further centralization of capital. The programs of these groups are capitalist. They do not call for the abolition of wage-labor through workers' revolution and a workers' state, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Instead they call for elections and capitalist nationalization. The only thing progressive in this epoch is the smashing of capital. Either an organization is for the proletarian revolution and the abolition of capital or it is for capitalism.

A workers' state can not be created through elections or by a small section of the class. Socialism can not be created through the dictates of a few,

but by the dictatorship of the working class as a class.

The programs of the Trotskyists like the programs of the Stalinists and the Maoists, because they are bourgeois, are reactionary. Their propaganda serves only to confuse and hold down the consciousness of the working class. For instance the slogan "Forward to a Workers Government" should be read as backwards to a "workers' government". We can take as a measure of the working class's faith in capitalist elections, the amount of abstention that has been taking place. A large part of the class (unlike the "left") has come to the conclusion that elections are irrelevant to solving their problems. Unfortunately they have generally only a rudimentary understanding of why. The capitalists would love to have workers believe their problems evolve from the fact that some "bad guys" are in Washington and that they should be replaced with "good guys". Revolutionaries must struggle against this ideological poison and make clear that the elections are indeed irrelevant except as an obstacle to the workers' struggles, because the class relations on which they are based are in complete contradiction to the needs of the working class.

Whatever else happens in the Watergate scandal does not really mean much for the working class for it only means a few possible changes on the electoral plane. What is important is the coming struggles of the class against capital as the economic crisis deepens.



Read FORWARD

A Journal of Marxist Theory

Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter 1974 (available now)
 Contains:
 "Trotsky's Theory of 'Permanent Revolution': Marxism or Revisionism?"
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in Spain and Germany. In the second imperialist world war they again carried out their counter-revolutionary role by leading workers into the bourgeois nationalist resistance movements in Western Europe and agitating for support to Russian imperialism in the name of "defending the degenerated workers' state". Today Trotskyism functions as mystifier par excellence of capitalism. They call for electing workers' governments. They demand that the capitalist state nationalize the means of production "under workers' control". They support this or that national capital bloc, if not Russia and China, then the NLF and the Arab states. Their program, like that of Social-Democracy and Stalinism is one of reforming and refining capitalism, not destroying it.

16. The last period of reconstruction came to a definitive end in 1968. The entry into a new conjunctural crisis brought with it a new upsurge in militant class struggle on the part of the working class. It has also brought about an as yet small but important revitalization of the revolutionary left. As the crisis of capital drives inexorably on to a third imperialist world war, the necessity of a clear communist intervention into the struggles of the working class becomes ever more apparent. Our task as revolutionary communists is to show the way forward for the working class: communist revolution. It is our task in this period to represent "the future of the movement within the movement of today". We must break down the mystifications of capital: nationalism, unionism, statism, electoralism, etc., which are barriers to the growth of revolutionary class consciousness in the working class as a whole. As part of the internationalization of the class struggle we must carry out the theoretical and programmatic clarification necessary for the forging of an internationalist communist tendency in the working class, which can provide the basis for the International Party of Revolutionary Workers. Revolutionary consciousness and combative militancy are necessary for the proletariat to carry out its historic tasks. It has already shown that it possesses the latter. It is up to revolutionary communist workers to provide the theoretical and programmatic clarity that it may develop the former. If we are successful, the future belongs to the workers of the world. If we fail, it belongs to no one.

Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring 1974

Will contain:
 "The Role of the British Labour Party: A Marxist Critique"
 "Theses on the Basic Tasks of the Communist International" adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International
 An International Exchange:
 "Defense of the Proletarian Character of the October Revolution"
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 "Introduction" to a reprinting of "Defense of the Proletarian Character of the October Revolution"
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 "Where INTERNACIONALISMO Goes Wrong on the October Revolution"
 by the Revolutionary Workers Group
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FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM!

The world we live in is a world where people are divided into classes according to their role in production. The two major classes in society are the capitalist class and the working class. The capitalists own the means of production (factories, machines, etc.) but produce nothing. The workers, on the other hand, receive only meager wages for the sale of their labor power to the capitalists. Almost all production in society is done by the workers. However, almost all the benefits from this production go to the capitalists. The basis for production in this society is profit. The capitalists are not interested in having the workers produce things that people can use or that people need. They are only interested in what makes them the biggest profit. Thus, while the capitalists get richer and richer, the workers are worse off than they were before.

In order to increase profits the capitalists resort to all sorts of techniques which most of us are familiar with: speed-up, wage cuts, unemployment, labor-saving machinery. While, for instance, labor-saving machinery would be progressive in a society run by the workers, it does nothing for them under capitalism. It is just another attack on the workers.

Another feature of capitalist society is war. Every day there is a war going on somewhere in the world. This

is due to the necessity of the capitalists to wage war in order to get ahead of the capitalists in other countries. The working class has no interests in supporting these wars. What the workers want is peace. However, there can be no peace until the capitalists have been removed from power and this society replaced by one run by the workers in the interests of the toiling masses.

To do this, it is not enough to elect people to Congress or as President. The government is nothing more than the executive committee of the ruling class. It is the owners of the big corporations who have the final say as to what goes on. It is necessary to organize our own workers' councils. These councils will be the class rule of the workers after the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. When capitalism goes Congress will go with it. All the democracy surrounding the Congress is just a sham to keep us tied to this system. It is democracy for the rich, for the capitalists. Our democracy will be real democracy, proletarian democracy, the democracy of the many. We do not simply want a workers' government, we want a workers' republic.

In order to throw out the capitalists and build a workers' republic and socialism the working class needs a revolutionary party. Such a party must be based on *The Communist Manifesto*, the first two congresses of the Communist

(Third) International, and the revolutionary work of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg and Bogdanov. It must be a democratic-centralist party. However, it is not enough to build such a party here in the United States. Capitalism is a world system. Even so-called "Communist" Russia and China are capitalist (state capitalist). In order to wage a successful worldwide struggle against capitalism the workers must have an international party. It is toward the construction of the International Party of Revolutionary Workers (Fourth International) that the Revolutionary Workers Group and Workers' Truth are dedicated.

In 1917 the Russian workers seized power under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. However, the revolution was isolated and the Russian workers exhausted from the hard struggle in a backward country lost power when the Bolsheviks lost faith in the world proletariat in 1921. The four years of the revolutionary dictatorship still remain, however, as a beacon for workers throughout the world.

Under capitalism the workers are nothing more than menials. We deserve a better life. We deserve socialism. However, it will not be handed to us on a platter. We must fight for it. For if we do not fight for socialism we will be handed barbarism. Socialism or barbarism? Fight for Socialism!

Not a Workers' Government

but a Workers' State

A great deal is being said about the Watergate scandal both by the right and left wings of capitalism. Many confusing and abstract ideas like bourgeois democracy vs. bourgeois dictatorship have been brought up by the scandal. For the most part it should be assumed that capitalist politicking like Watergate and any other intra-class fight between different sectors of capitalism be considered as irrelevant to the status of the working class in society. But since the scandal has provided a means for the bourgeois socialists to spread their confusion as to the nature of capitalism we will take a look at it to see what all the commotion is about.

One of the major breakthroughs has been the introduction of harsh accusations against the "piece maker" (bigger piece of the pie for American imperialism) Henry Kissinger. Nixon and Kissinger have both been accused of initiating illegal wiretaps on White House employees, National Security Council members and reporters in the period May 1969--February 1971. The House Judiciary Committee which has been conducting investigations for the possible impeachment of Nixon has asked if the illegal operations of the "plumbers unit" were actually a continuation of earlier spying plans initiated by Nixon. Evidence presented to the committee contained in documents have led to such a theory. Evidence showed that both Kissinger and Nixon received information from the taps, but a controversy has opened up over who initiated them.

Kissinger has repeatedly stated that Nixon ordered the taps during a meeting with FBI Director Hoover in the spring of 1969. On a tape transcript submitted to the committee Nixon is

heard saying Kissinger initiated the taps. The accusation against Kissinger has caused him to threaten to resign.

Another aspect of the Watergate scandal which was being investigated by the Senate has turned up a real can of worms. The accusations against Nixon that he took payoffs from the Dairy Assn. to raise milk prices has not been investigated too hard since all of the Senators investigating have been found to have also received payoffs from the Dairy Assn.

It should be clear from the myriad of evidence that has come to light that events like Watergate go on all the time in capitalist political circles. Payoffs happen all the times both with Republicans and with Democrats. Whether Nixon or Ford or any one else is president is really inconsequential as it is the capitalist class which runs things anyway.

Some groups of the capitalist left say that sections of the bourgeoisie want a "strong man" to consolidate a dictatorship. What these groups fear is that their rights under capitalist "democracy" will be quashed to the level of the rights of militant workers.

The Workers League (which despite its name has nothing to do with the interests of the working class) has launched a campaign to oust Nixon and supposedly save us from "dictatorship". How we will be saved is through the AFL-CIO holding an emergency congress of "labor" which will force Nixon out through industrial actions and form a labor party committed to "socialist" (read state capitalist) policies.

The Workers League BULLETIN has stated in an article "Nixon Speaks: A Portrait of a President":

"Nixon's turn to the police state methods of Watergate exposes the

preparations of the ruling class for dictatorship as it is forced to confront the power of the American working class under conditions of the deepest economic crisis in history."

The TORCH has presented a similar line. They too see dictatorship on the way (that means using the stick and not the carrot, the bourgeois socialists prefer their capitalism tempered with "democracy"). In an article entitled "Impeachment Showdown" the TORCH states:

"A revolutionary leadership would call a nationwide Congress of Labor and the Oppressed where democratically elected representatives of workers and the oppressed masses would meet and hammer out a strategy. That Congress would mobilize the working class for a general strike to FORCE Nixon out and demand new elections. It would launch a revolutionary labor party standing on a socialist program, a party that would lead the working class, fight for the only government which it can trust, a workers' government."

The Spartacists also have their say as to what bourgeois demands the workers should support. In WORKERS VANGUARD we find:

"Play the Watergate Tapes in Full on Nationwide Radio!
Abolish the Secret Political Police (FBI, CIA)!

Abolish the Standing Army and its Officer Corps! For a Workers Militia Based on the Trade Unions!

For Labor Action to Force Immediate Presidential Elections! For a Workers Candidate!

Break With the Republicans and Democrats--Dump Meany/Woodcock--For a Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions!

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